

The National Herb Garden's Self-Guided Tour



of Herbs Used in Hispanic Culture

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Research Service
United States National Arboretum

September 15 - October 15



Annatto, Achiote

(*Bixa orellana*)

In Puerto Rico, the processed seed of annatto colors rice orange-yellow. Central and South American Indians painted their bodies with this dye. [Dye Garden]

Chile Peppers, Pimientos Picantes

(*Capsicum annuum*)

The Mayans of Guatemala used chiles to settle their stomachs. They also rubbed a pepper mixture on their gums to ease toothaches.

[Medicinal Garden and Chile Pepper Border]



Cuban Oregano, Orégano Cubano

(*Coleus amboinicus*)

Leaves of this strongly oregano-flavored plant are

used in black bean dishes.

[Culinary Garden Theme Bed]



Culantro (this is not Cilantro)

(*Eryngium foetidum*)

Cooks use the leaves in beans, stews, and rice. It is also one of the ingredients in “sofrito”—a blend of onions, culantro, oregano, Cubanelle chile peppers, garlic, and Ají chile

peppers.

[Culinary Garden]

Epazote

(*Chenopodium ambrosioides*)

Known to the Mexican Indians as Hierba Santa Maria, the

pungent leaves of epazote flavor beans, soup, corn, and shellfish. They are added to bean dishes to prevent gas. This herb is used to expel worms and phlegm and to treat asthma. [Culinary Garden]



Ginger, Jengibre

(*Zingiber officinale*)

The root of this herb flavors desserts. Ginger tea is used as a home remedy to alleviate sore throats.

[Medicinal, Asian, and Beverage Gardens]



**Habanero Pepper,
Pimiento Habanero**
(*Capsicum chinense*)

This chile, the hottest known to exist, is commercially grown almost exclusively on the Yucatán

Peninsula. In Costa Rica, Habanero peppers are used to make a homemade hot sauce known as “chileras.” Chileras also includes pickled vegetables and vinegar.
[Chile Pepper Border]

**Heliotrope,
Heliotropo**
(*Heliotropium arborescens*)

The fresh plant was taken by the Incas of Peru to reduce fever. A powder made from the flower is used to scent soaps, and an oil is extracted for perfumes.
[Fragrance Garden]



**Lemon Verbena,
Hierba Luisa**
(*Aloysia triphylla*)

Native to Argentina and Chile, the aromatic leaves of

this herb make a soothing tea.
[Colonial, Culinary, Fragrance, and Beverage Gardens]



**Mexican Oregano,
Orégano Mejicano**
(*Lippia graveolens*)

In Mexico, the leaves are used like true oregano in cooking. In Mexican folk medicine, it is used to expel phlegm.
[Culinary Garden]

Also known as **Mexican Oregano,
Orégano Mejicano**
(*Poliomintha longiflora*)

Its strongly-flavored leaves are used like oregano in Mexico and Texas.
[Culinary Garden]

**Nasturtium,
Mastuerzo**
(*Tropaeolum majus*)

This herb has grown in the Andes for 8,000 years. The leaves and flowers are edible.
[Culinary Garden]



**Pineapple Sage,
Salvia**
(*Salvia elegans*)

In Mexico, leaf tea is made to calm an upset stomach. The leaves also flavor pork, chicken, or rice dishes.
[Culinary, Fragrance, and Salvia Border]



**Upland Cotton,
Algodón**
(*Gossypium hirsutum*)

Native to Central America, the

seed hairs of this herb have been woven into fabric for over 2,500 years. The seeds are also pressed for an edible oil.
[Industrial Garden]

Stevia

(*Stevia rebaudiana*)
Also known as the Sugar Herb of Paraguay, stevia sweetens teas and foods. In Paraguay, it also treats diabetes and hypertension.
[Industrial Garden]



Sugar Cane, Caña de Azúcar
(*Saccharum officinarum*)

This herb is widely cultivated in Caribbean countries and the Americas. It is used in desserts and rum processing.
[Industrial Garden]

(*Laurus nobilis*)

[Culinary Garden and also container plants]

[illegible]

(*Tagetes lucida*)

[Culinary Garden]

denotes an herb important in Hispanic cultures. When you come across it, look in the brochure to find the plant's use.

(*Zinnia* spp.)

[Dye
Garden]



For this tour, we have selected herbs that are presently at their peak performance.

We would like to know what herbs you use. Please write your comments in the space below and give them to the desk attendant in the Administration Building.